

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-16 (cancelled without prejudice)

17. (new) A protective enclosure for a touch screen device having a touch screen comprising:

a shell that is capable of enclosing said touch screen device, said touch screen device being a separate unit from said protective enclosure, said touch screen device being insertable in and removable from said enclosure by hand, said shell being substantially crush-resistant and having an elevated protective rim around a perimeter portion of said touch screen of said touch screen device so that when said touch screen device is disposed in said enclosure, said touch screen of said touch screen device is recessed with respect to said protective rim of said shell so that said elevated protective rim protects said touch screen from breakage; and

a flexible protective membrane that is integrally fixed on said shell so that said flexible protective membrane is disposed over said touch screen of said touch screen device when said touch screen device is disposed in said enclosure, said flexible protective membrane having a back side that has a substantially planar smooth surface that is adjacent to said touch screen of said touch screen device when said touch screen device is disposed in said enclosure so that tactile inputs on a front side of said flexible protective membrane are communicated to said touch screen through said flexible protective membrane, said flexible protective membrane being at least partially transparent such that said touch screen is visible through said flexible protective membrane.

18. (new) The protective enclosure of claim 17 wherein said protective enclosure is watertight.

19. (new) The protective enclosure of claim 18 wherein said flexible protective membrane is sufficiently thin to transmit smooth strokes from a stylus to said

touch screen without interruption of said strokes, said flexible protective membrane being sufficiently smooth and sufficiently firm to prevent said stylus from catching on said membrane.

20. (new) The protective enclosure of claim 19 wherein said shell of said protective enclosure further comprises grip-enhancing structures that enable said protective enclosure to be securely held by hand in slippery conditions.

21. (new) The protective enclosure of claim 20 wherein said protective enclosure further comprises cushioning that protects said touch screen device from mechanical shock.

22. (new) The protective enclosure of claim 21 further comprising at least one recessed area in said front side of said flexible protective membrane, said recessed area disposed to align with at least one predetermined region of said touch screen of said touch screen device when said touch screen device is disposed in said enclosure, said recessed area having a perimeter edge that provides tactile feedback, said recessed area being sufficiently thin so that said tactile inputs are transmitted through said flexible protective membrane to said touch screen of said touch screen device when said touch screen device is disposed in said enclosure.

23. (new) The protective enclosure of claim 18 wherein said protective enclosure uses at least one snap to securely close said enclosure around said separate touch screen device.

24. (new) The protective enclosure of claim 21 further comprising textured areas in said front side of said flexible protective membrane, said textured areas providing tactile feedback, said textured areas customized through the incorporation of distinct textures that overlay and correspond to distinct functional areas of said touch screen device.

25. (new) The protective enclosure of claim 24 further comprising printed areas in said flexible protective membrane, said printed areas providing visual feedback, said printed areas customized through the incorporation of distinct printing that corresponds to distinct functional areas of said touch screen device.

26. (new) The protective enclosure of claim 25 further comprising colored areas in said flexible protective membrane, said colored areas providing visual feedback, said colored areas customized through the incorporation of distinct colors that correspond to distinct functional areas of said touch screen device.

27. (new) A method of manufacturing a protective enclosure for a touch screen device having a touch screen comprising:

providing a protective shell that is adapted to enclose a touch screen device, said touch screen device being a separate unit from said protective enclosure, said touch screen device being insertable in and removable from said shell by hand, said shell being substantially crush-resistant and providing an elevated protective rim around a perimeter portion of said touch screen of said touch screen device so that when said touch screen device is disposed in said enclosure, said touch screen is recessed with respect to said protective rim of said shell so that said elevated protective rim protects said touch screen of said touch screen device from breakage;

providing a flexible protective membrane that is capable of being integrally fixed on said shell so that said flexible protective membrane is disposed over said touch screen of said touch screen device when said touch screen device is disposed in said enclosure, said flexible protective membrane having a back side that has a substantially planar smooth surface adjacent said touch screen when said touch screen device is disposed in said enclosure so that tactile inputs on a front side of said flexible protective membrane are communicated to said touch screen through said flexible protective membrane, said flexible protective

membrane being at least partially transparent such that said touch screen is visible through said flexible protective membrane; and

fixing said flexible protective membrane onto said protective shell so that said flexible protective membrane and said protective shell form a protective enclosure for said touch screen device.

28. (new) The method of claim 27 wherein said step of fixing said flexible protective membrane onto said protective shell so that said flexible protective membrane and said protective shell form a protective enclosure for said touch screen device further comprises fixing said flexible protective membrane onto said protective shell to form a watertight protective enclosure.

29. (new) The method of claim 28 further comprising:

forming recessed areas in said front side of a flexible protective membrane, said recessed areas disposed to overlay and correspond to functional control areas of said touch screen device.

30. (new) The method of claim 28 further comprising:

printing on predetermined areas of said flexible protective membrane to customize said flexible protective membrane.

31. (new) The method of claim 28 further comprising customizing:

texturing predetermined areas of said flexible protective membrane to customize said flexible protective membrane.

32. (new) The method of claim 28 further comprising customizing:

coloring predetermined areas of said flexible protective membrane to customize said flexible protective membrane.

33. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein said step of forming recessed areas in a front side of a flexible protective membrane is implemented using thermoforming that enables thin-walled parts as required for precise recessed areas and an extensive choice of patterns, finishes, and textures.

34. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein said step of forming recessed areas in a front side of a flexible protective membrane is implemented using injection molding.